

Message Text

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ACTION AID-31

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INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2309
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID ELTN BC
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE INCREASE OF FY 19 FUNDS ON TRANSPORT SECTOR-
MEETING WITH VICE PRESIDENT MAY 18, 1978

REF: A) NAIROBI 7729 B) GABORONE 1428

1. AS A FOLLOW-UP TO RECENT TRIP OF V.P. AND AMBASSADOR TO GHANZI, BOTSWANA (SEE REF B) AND RECENTLY RECEIVED INDICATIONS OF POSSIBLE INCREASE IN FY 79 AID LEVELS IN TRANSPORT SECTOR, AMBASSADOR, DCM AND ACTING AOO MET WITH V.P. AND PS/MFDP FOR ONE HOUR ON MAY 18.

2. IN HIS OPENING COMMENTS, THE AMBASSADOR NOTED POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR FY 79 IN TRANSPORT SECTOR, DEPENDING OF COURSE ON CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL. HE SAID WE THEREFORE WANTED TO REVIEW GOB TRANSPORT SECTOR PRIORITIES AND PROSPECTS, SPECIFICALLY ROAD PROJECTS OF REGIONAL SCOPE.

3. V.P. REPLIED THAT HE WAS PLEASANTLY SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT U.S. COULD AGAIN CONSIDER ROADS, WHICH
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HAD FALLEN ON "DEAF EARS" IN PAST. AS FOR PRIORITIES, HE SAID RHODESIAN RAILWAY TAKEOVER REMAINS GOB'S FIRST PRIORITY. RR DOES NOT REFLECT, SAID V.P., A POLITICAL AMBITION FOR A PRESTIGE PROJECT; IT IS RATHER INEXTRICABLY TIED TO GOB SECURITY AND ECONOMY, "TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE NATION". V.P. SAID HE RECOGNIZED, HOWEVER, THAT

THE RR PROJECT MIGHT VERY WELL NOT BE ORGANIZED BY IBRD IN TIME FOR USE OF 1979 FUNDS, IN WHICH CASE GOB ID INDEED HAVE OTHER PROJECTS IN TRANSPORT SECTOR OF VERY HIGH PRIORITY.

4. THE AMBASSADOR TOLD THE V.P. THAT IT WAS A GIVEN THAT USE OF INCREASED AID FUNDS FOR OTHER PROJECTS IN TRANSPORT SECTOR WOULD IN NO WAY PREJUDICE THE RR, AND GOB WAS ASKED TO NAME OTHER HIGH PRIORITY PROJECTS.

5. PERMSEC/MFDP RESPONDED BY QUICKLY TICKING OFF OUTSTANDING PROJECTS IN TRANSPORT SECTOR SUCH AS (A) FINISHING THE PAVING OF NATA-KAZUNGULA ROAD, WHICH HE BELIEVED EEC WAS GOING TO INVITE AID TO CO-FINANCE; (B) THE PAVING OF THE PALAPYE-SEROWE ROAD; (C) DEVELOPMENT OF ROADS WITHING THE TULI BLOCK TO SELEBI-PIKWE IN ORDER TO GET THE TULI BLOCK RESIDENTS TO THINK OF TRADING IN BOTSWANA RATHER THAN OUTSIDE IT. HAVING GOTTEN THESE PROJECTS OUT OF THE WAY IN A RATHER PRO FORMA MANNER, PS THEN ASKED IF USG WOULD BE INTERESTED IN THE GHANZI ROAD PROJECT. WHEN ASSURED THAT THIS WAS EXACTLY THE KIND OF PROJECT WE WOULD POTENTIALLY BE INTERESTED IN DOING, BOTH V.P. AND PS BECAME OBVIOUSLY STIMULATED AND EVEN MORE ELOQUENT IN DESCRIBING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THEIR PLANS.

6. V.P. ELABORATED ON THE GHANZI ROAD, WHICH THE GOB SEES COMING IN SECTIONS, THE FIRST BEING LOBATSE-KANYE-JWANENG, WHICH IS FUNDED. THE SECOND SECTION WOULD BE A NEW ROAD WSW TO INTERSECT WITH PRESENT TRACK, AND THEN ON TO KANG, SITE OF P1.50 MILLION SECONDARY SCHOOL (COMMUNITY COLLEGE). THIRD SECTION WOULD BE FROM KANG TO GHANZI. HE SAID ROAD WOULD BE VITAL NOT ONLY FOR ITS OBVIOUS MISSION OF SERVING AS EAST/WEST EXIT TO NAMIBIA FOR BOTSWANA EXPORTS AND ARTERY FOR TRANSPORT OF GHANZI AREA CATTLE TO LOBATSE ABATTOIR, BUT ALSO BECAUSE IT WOULD FOMENT THE DEVELOPMENT OF SERVICES (E.G., TOURIST FACILITIES, SCHOOLS, CLINICS, SMALL INDUSTRIES) ALONG ITS ENTIRE LENGTH. A WHOLE NEW PART OF BOTSWANA WOULD BE OPENED TO DEVELOPMENT.

7. PS/MFDP ALSO USED OPPORTUNITY OF MEETING TO GENERALIZE ABOUT NEED FOR DONORS TO INCREASE THEIR FLEXIBILITY IN ASSISTING GOB.

8. AMBASSADOR BROUGHT MEETING TO A CLOSE WITH SUGGESTION THAT GOB BEGIN THINKING ABOUT HOW FUNDS, IF MADE AVAILABLE, COULD BE OBLIGATED IN FY 79, AND THE NEED FOR THE US AND GOB TO CONFIRM A COMMITMENT ON A SPECIFIC PROJECT. V.P. CHARGED PS WITH THIS ON A URGENT BASIS.

9. COMMENT:

A) V.P. WAS USUALLY AFFABLE BUT INCISIVE SELF, WITH GOOD-HUMORED IRONY REFERRING TO AID'S APPARENT REVERSAL OF SIGNALS BY COMING TO GOB WITH POSSIBLE IDEAS OF INFRASTRUCTURE - AN AREA HE INDICATED HAD FALLEN ON "DEAF EARS" IN THE PAST WHEN GOB HAD LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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REQUESTED ASSISTANCE.

B) TWO TURNING POINTS WERE STRIKINGLY NOTICEABLE IN THE MEETING: WHEN THE V.P. EXPRESSED HIS REALIZATION THAT RR PROJECT MIGHT NOT BE READY TO GO IN 1979; AND WHEN PS SEIZED THE INITIATIVE TO ASK US IF WE WOULD BE INTERESTED IN GHANZI ROAD PROJECT. THE LATTER IS, WE BELIEVE, GOB'S APPARENTLY HIGHEST TRANSPORT PRIORITY (AFTER RR, OF COURSE). WE BELIEVE IT TO OFFER EXCITING OPPORTUNITIES FOR USG PARTICIPATION IN ACROSS-THE-BOARD ASSISTANCE TO POOR, AND WHICH AT SAME TIME MEETS HIGHEST USG CRITERIA FOR IN-COUNTRY AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

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